

Mistral Team Blogs

Mistral Baits Boilie Field Test

Martin Lawrence - August 2016

Looking for top quality shelf-life boilies you can use with confidence straight from the bag? Searching for a proven boilie that puts fish on the bank, not just on hungry commercial venues, but on weedy syndicate waters, where it's competing against natural food sources? Me too.

I'm no freezer baits snob. The quality of modern shelf-life/long term mixes has improved massively over the last ten years, to the point where I'm happy to use them for most of my carp fishing. I love the convenience of having bait ready to go whenever I can grab a few hours, and not worrying about it going 'off' or having to air dry it on longer sessions.

This year I've been using several different shelf-life/long term boilies from a company who've been on the carp scene since 1988, Northamptonshire based Mistral Baits. In fact, I was so impressed with the results that recently I went to see them about joining their team.



Taste Test



The boilies I've been using are the new Squid and Black Pepper from the Instant Carp Food range, as well as Belachan Shrimp and Chilli Pepper from the Specialist range. I don't know if you're like me, but I always taste a bait before I use it. I find a quick nibble reveals the subtle flavours and textures in the mix. Now, I admit, tasting is more pleasing with the sweet, fruity and nutty baits, less so with the fishmeal baits, and anything with belachan in it takes a strong stomach. However, belachan is a top carp catching ingredient, so it's a good move from Mistral to include it in the product range. On opening the Belachan Shrimp bag, it did not disappoint; the pungent aroma hits your hooter with

an impressive punch. The taste is less aggressive, actually surprisingly and pleasingly sweet and fishy. The Chilli Pepper boilies have a distinctive but unusual aroma, hard to describe, and different to anything else I have comes across. They have a complex flavour combining a moderate amount of chilli heat blended with a slight sweetness, which I like a lot. They contain the classic ingredient Robin Red, which of course has been catching carp for decades.



Of the three, the Squid and Black Pepper is the most subtle on aroma, but the fishy taste and peppery tang indicated by its name comes through strongly. The dark brown colour of this boilie really appeals to me and suits the understated approach I prefer on the gin clear waters of my syndicate. All three boilies have complex base mixes, by which I mean you can taste and feel the texture of the different ingredients, and none have a bitter after taste. I happily gave each of them a thumbs-up on the Bivvy Tramp Taste Test.



The Field Tests

In order to give them a proper field test, I decided to fish three different waters, two of which could be classed as relatively easy, Crystal Lakes and Bluebell Lake, and one which is moderately hard, Ivo Lake on St Ives Lakes fishery.

Crystal Lakes Session

Coincidentally it was May half-term when I received the bait, so I enlisted the help of a couple of up and coming carpers, my son Kai and his mate Oli. Armed with our bag of Mistral goodies, we set off for a day at Crystal Lakes. We each chose one of the three boilies, and set up a carp match with two categories, biggest unit of the day and most fish.

It didn't take long for the action to begin. About ten minutes after we started, Oli was away; the Chilli Pepper racing into an early lead with a hard fighting low double from the margin. To our great surprise and delight, as we were sorting the photos, one of Kai's rods roared off, the Belachan Shrimp levelling up the score. At this point I was mightily relieved, because on our last visit we right royally blanked and the boys were not impressed. Our tactics this time were proper Old Skool, PVA stringers, using the matching dips to give us extra pulling power. It was working. Oli was back in again about thirty minutes later, followed by the first fish on the Squid and Black Pepper on my rods. On the day, each of the baits caught well, but the clear winner was Chilli Pepper, securing both the biggest fish and the most, an impressive and confidence boosting start to the test. It is also worth mentioning that the matching pop-ups did the business too, and gave us the opportunity to mix them with the bottom baits to fish wafers and snowman presentations.



Right: Kai Lawrence with one of his fish caught on Belachan Shrimp

Below: Oli Clinton with a cracking common on Chilli Pepper



Bluebell Lake

Next it was up to Bluebell Lake at Tansor near Peterborough on my own, where I decided to focus on the Chilli Pepper. It was one of those typical summer mornings in flaming June, you know, absolutely pissing it down. However, setting up on the end of a strong, warm wet south westerly it felt good for a bite or two. I wasn't disappointed. My Chilli Pepper hook bait dunked in the pungent spicy oily matching dip was away within the hour. This was followed up with three more doubles before lunch. I think it's fair to say that the Chilli Pepper is a very good carp bait; one that you can use with confidence on any venue.



A mid double mirror on the Chilli Pepper



Well and truly nailed on the Chilli Pepper

St Ives – Ivo Lake



Ivo Lake Photo: Chris Williams

And so to St Ives Lakes Fishery, where all spring and early summer I've been targeting a magnificent old scaly whacker, the Ivo Linear. To cut a long story short, getting a carp bite on Ivo Lake was proving trickier than I envisaged, unlike the tench and bream bites which were coming thick and fast. I had gone two months without any success on the carp front. But just when I was beginning to despair, an opportunity presented itself. Thanks again to the 2016 June monsoons, the pipe joining Ivo and Lowries lakes burst into life. River water flooded into the pit, attracting all the carp like bees to a jam jar. It was a MONSTER CHANCE! That morning, winking at me in the back of the car was a bag of Squid and Black Pepper boilies. Go on then, I thought, let's see if you can do the trick. Maybe

the old Lin fancies a bit of peppery sea food. Well yes, as it happens it did. Within thirty minutes of casting onto the spot by the pipe it was away, and on the end was the gorgeous Ivo Linear weighing in at 30lb 12oz. Now, I have to say the conditions were absolutely bang on, but Mistral Baits Squid and Black pepper did the business.



The Ivo Linear, 30lb 12oz, caught on the Squid and Black Pepper

Conclusions

Mistral baits are perhaps best known for their legendary Rosehip Isotonic boilies, which consistently put chunks on the bank all across Europe. So it's fair to say they already have many proven boilies in their range, but what I have learnt from doing this field test is that they are also busy researching and developing innovative new mixes. I was seriously impressed with the quality of the new Belachan Shrimp, Chilli Pepper and Squid & Black pepper shelf-life boilies, which are competitively priced, and put carp on the bank at a range of venues during the testing.

If you haven't checked out the Mistral range of baits, I strongly recommend that you do. It has been an eye opener for me, and I will definitely be using their baits in my carp fishing a lot more in the future.